THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • MONDAY • MARCH 02, 2026 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

Sanju Samson thanks the heavens after helping India win on Sunday | DEBADATTA MALLICK

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T20 ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

SURYA & CO SEAL SEMIFINAL BERTH, FACE ENGLAND IN MUMBAI ON MAR 5

The defending champions defeat West Indies in Kolkata in the virtual quarterfinal of the T20 World Cup on Sunday. A look...

CLINICAL INDIA CRUISE PAST WEST INDIES

It was an evening where a lot of things fell in place for India. First, they won the toss and opted to field. Then, Jasprit Bumrah put brakes on WI with a two-wicket over as they finished with 195/4 thanks to Jason Holder (34 n.o) & Rovman Powell (37 n.o). When India lost Ishan Kishan and Abhishek Sharma early, Sanju Samson stood tall to see through the chase.

SAMSON SEIZES THE MOMENT AT BIG STAGE

- Brought in to support Abhishek's poor run in Chennai, Samson saved his best for the must-win clash against West Indies
- Samson set the tone up front, and continued to pile on while wickets fell around him. The Kerala batter smashed an unbeaten 97 from just 50 balls to make a statement when India needed him the most | P13

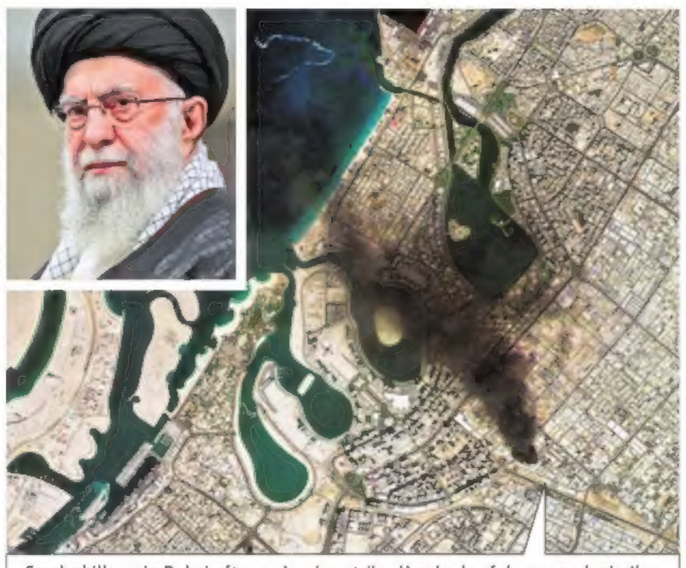
97 n.o

SANJU SAMSON SEALED THE SF SPOT WITH A 97 N.O FROM 50 BALLS

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

War escalates after US-Israeli airstrikes kill Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei; Tehran goes on the offensive, hits US allies in Gulf; leaders urge restraint

This videograb combo shows the sequence of large-scale strikes on "the headquarters of the Iranian terror regime" in Tehran on March 1 | PTI



Smoke billows in Dubai after an Iranian strike. Hundreds of drones and missiles targeted UAE and other Gulf allies of the US after Khamenei's death | AFP

DANGEROUS ESCALATION

WAR WATCH

AGENCIES @ Tehran/Tel Aviv

IRANIAN Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was assassinated by Israel and the United States in a major attack on Iran, throwing the future of the Islamic Republic into doubt and raising the risk of protracted regional instability.

News agency IRNA announced the 86-year-old's death on Sunday after a joint US- Israeli aerial bombardment targeted Iranian military and governmental sites.

US President Donald Trump threatened that the "heavy and pinpoint bombing" would continue through the week.

The head of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, Major General Mohammad Pakpour, was also declared dead in airstrikes. Also killed was Ali Shamkhani, long a figurehead within Iran's security establishment, IRNA said. Among the other top officials who died in the strikes were Iran police intelligence chief Gholamreza Rezaian and the chief of armed forces, Abdolrahim Mousavi.

The Israeli army announced "large-scale" strikes targeting the "heart of Tehran" for the second day running.

Israel's Defence Minister Israel Katz said Khamenei's killing was a "turning point". Iran formed an interim leadership council to take over.

Sources said Ayatollah Alireza Arafi was part of it, alongside President Masoud Pezeshkian and Chief Justice Mohseni-Eje'i. The body will rule until a new leader is selected.

In retaliation, Iran fired missiles across the Middle East and Israel, while Israel conducted fresh strikes on Tehran.

In Israel, at least nine people were killed as Iranian missiles hit a synagogue in Beit Shemesh.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said the killing of Khamenei was a "declaration of war against Muslims", vowing vengeance. Iran's security chief Ali Larijani vowed to hit the US and Israel with "a force never seen before."

In the UAE, three people had died and 58 wounded, forcing it to shutter its embassy in Iran and recalling its ambassador.

In Kuwait, one person was killed and 32 were reportedly wounded. The US military said three service members were killed in the Iran operation.

Meanwhile, Trump said he would "be talking" to Iranian leaders. "They want to talk, and I have agreed to talk."

Iranian Red Crescent revised the death toll from an Israeli strike on a school in Minab on Saturday to 108.

As crisis deepens, India braces for economic impact

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

AS the war between Iran and US-Israel escalates, India is bracing for a range of macroeconomic adversity. Crude oil prices, which had already been firming up amid rising tension, shot up from around $65 per barrel to $72-73 per barrel over the past few days. Going forward, the volatility in oil, currency, and equity markets is expected to remain high.

At the heart of the economic concern is the Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly 20% of global petroleum liquids and a fifth of global LNG shipments transit. India, which consumes 5.5 million barrels of crude oil per day and imports more than 80% of its requirement, is particularly exposed. Around 1.5-2 million barrels per day of India's crude imports pass through this narrow corridor. In FY25, nearly 50% of India's crude oil imports and 54% of LNG imports were routed via Hormuz. Any disruption — or even the perception of risk — can inject a geopolitical premium into oil prices.

For every $1/barrel rise in Brent price, there would be an impact of ₹0.52/litre on diesel and ₹0.55/litre on petrol retail prices

Madhavi Arora, Economist, Emkay Global

India sources a substantial portion of its crude from West Asia. While refiners can diversify supplies to the US, Africa or South America, global oil benchmarks determine pricing. Elevated crude prices would still translate into a higher import bill.

Experts warn that the macroeconomic transmission to India is imminent; higher crude prices raise fuel and transportation costs, feeding into broader inflation. Manoranjan Sharma, chief economist at Informerics Ratings, said the immediate consequence would be rising inflationary pressure triggered by higher energy prices.

Modi chairs CCS meet to review situation

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) on Sunday night to review the rapidly escalating situation in West Asia following the attack on Iran by the United States and Israel and the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Modi landed in the national capital around 9.30 pm after wrapping up a two-day tour of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu.

The CCS, headed by the Prime Minister, includes Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as other members.

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, principal secretaries to the prime minister, P K Mishra and Shaktikanta Das, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Cabinet Secretary T V Somanathan and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri also attended.

Sources said the discussions focused on the safety of Indian nationals in the region. Nearly 10,000 Indians are in Iran, over 40,000 in Israel, and about nine million across West Asia and the Gulf.

With flight services disrupted due to the military escalation in West Asia, hundreds of Indians are stranded in Dubai and other key hub airports.

350 flights of Indian carriers cancelled

New Delhi: Airlines from India announced cancellation of all flights to the region. The Civil Aviation Ministry said 350 flights operated by Indian carriers stood cancelled on Sunday. Airlines have announced full refund or rescheduling of all tickets booked until March 5 or 7, a source with DGCA said | P9

22 killed in Pak, protests in Kashmir, MP

Islamabad/Srinagar: Following Khamenei's killing, protests erupted across the world. In Pakistan, 10 people were killed as hundreds of protesters tried to storm the US consulate in Karachi, while 12 were killed elsewhere.Shia Muslims joined demonstrations in Kashmir and Bhopal too, many chanting anti-Israel and anti-US slogans | P11

15 Indians evacuated from oil tanker

New Delhi: An oil tanker carrying 20 crew members, including 15 Indians and five Iranians, and an Omani port near the strategic Strait of Hormuz were targeted in strikes on Sunday, marking the first reported attacks on Oman since Tehran launched retaliatory operations

Israel calls up reservists

Tel Aviv: The Israeli military said it was calling up almost 100,000 reservists as part of its ongoing campaign of strikes against arch-foe Iran named Roaring Lion, the IDF said

Emergency ops centres activated in all districts

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WITH the prevailing situation in West Asia and closure of airspace by several countries, the Karnataka government has fully activated its state and district Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) to assist stranded passengers, particularly Kannadigas affected by widespread flight disruptions.

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, who also serves as vice-chairman of the Karnataka State Disaster Management Authority, said international flight operations have been significantly disrupted following NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) declarations issued by multiple countries. As per the latest advisory from the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the airspace over Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, the UAE and Qatar remains closed up to March 2.

Passengers stranded at KIA in Bengaluru on Sunday | KEVIN NASHON

The disruption has left a large number of passengers from various countries, including Karnataka, stranded in affected Middle Eastern countries, particularly in the UAE (Dubai). CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

MAHA TRAGEDY

Blast at explosives plant kills at least 17

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

AT least 17 people were killed and 18 others critically injured in a major explosion at an ammunition manufacturing company near Nagpur on Sunday morning. A powerful blast occurred at 7.00 am, triggering massive flames in the Nonal crimping plant area, which spread to adjoining sections of the facility located in Raulgaon village, approximately 25 km from Nagpur city.

Sources said 35 workers and two supervisors were present at the time of the incident. A new shift had begun at 6 am.

The bodies were charred beyond recognition. Samples of the family members were being taken for DNA testing, the police said. The factory belonged to a major manufacturer of industrial explosives, including materials used for mining and infrastructure projects, such as detonators and explosive cartridges.

The incident comes a day after a blast at a cracker unit in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada district claimed 21 lives.

FIR against RTO official for 10,210 illegal FCs

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AFTER a departmental probe, the Karnataka Transport Department has filed a first information report (FIR) against an official of the Bengaluru Central Regional Transport Office (RTO) for allegedly issuing fitness certificates (FCs) to over 10,210 vehicles, largely from Gujarat, Maharashtra and Kerala, without inspection. The FIR also names vehicle owners as accused.

The FIR was registered at the HSR Layout Police Station following allegations on February 28 by Regional Transport Officer Deepak L after directions from senior officials. The action follows a complaint by advocate S Nataraj Sharma to the transport commissioner.

A departmental inquiry was ordered and a joint transport commissioner conducted an inspection on February 19, examining data available on the Vahan portal. Preliminary findings revealed that retired senior motor vehicle inspector Nisar Ahmed issued Form 38A certificates between August 1, 2025 and January 31, 2026.

The Gujarat transport commissioner's office had earlier flagged the issuance of certificates to 41 Gujarat-registered vehicles through email, following which Nisar Ahmed was suspended on January 20. He retired on January 31.

Based on the inquiry report submitted on February 27, the transport commissioner directed registration of a criminal case. The police have registered a case against Nisar Ahmed and the vehicle owners under criminal breach of trust and cheating under BNS.

Most vehicles from Gujarat, Maha & Kerala

Retired senior motor vehicle inspector Nisar Ahmed allegedly issued the fitness certificates without inspection

The issue was flagged by the Gujarat transport commissioner, after which Nisar Ahmed was suspended on January 20. He retired on Jan 31

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